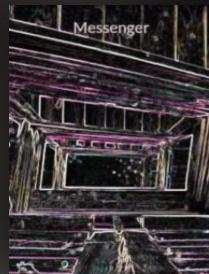




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Chapter 1 by Dovalord

Rain poured relentlessly onto the building, running over like a waterfall. Gargoyles loomed over the sides, drenched by the rain. Lightning flashed and thunder crashed overhead, a deafening boom sounding out. One of the statues moved. Dressed in a tight red sweatshirt and tight pants, his head protected by the black cap he wore. A headset sat in his ear, piercing the sound of falling rain.

"Blackbird to Redbird. Blackbird to Redbird, over!" A voice rang out. The man pressed a finger to his headset.

"Read you loud and clear, Blackbird." The man responded.

"Coming up to you shortly, be prepared for hand-off, over." Blackbird answered.

"Affirmative. ETA?" Redbird asked.

"Thirty seconds, give or take." The call replied. Redbird shifted on his haunches. It was nearly impossible to discern movement in the heavy rain, but he could see Blackbird vaulting over

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he surveyed the surrounding roof, scanning for movement. No sign of cops. Good. Tyson smiled and stood, walking to the fire escape ladder. Descending the slippery metal effortlessly, he landed in the alleyway.

Steam rose from the manholes, covering his approach to the street. He walked to the street, checking the corners. No patrol in sight, Tyson walked into the street and casually placed his hands into his sweatshirt pocket, which housed the tube. He walked for what seemed like hours when he approached the door to a warehouse. Looking for witnesses, Tyson knocked cautiously. The door creaked open, and Tyson took a tentative step inside.

The warehouse was pitch black inside. The pounding rain was muffled by the roof. The door slammed shut behind him, making Tyson jump. Footsteps approached and Tyson could see the outline of a figure in front of him. Tyson could see movement and then the glint of hard metal. The sound of a click, and shifting feet.

"Hand it over, Tyson." A commanding voice said. Tyson dropped to his knees and swept out a leg. He felt it make contact with the hostile's leg and then empty air as the assailant was lifted off his feet. Tyson made a blind grab for the gun and pulled it effortlessly from the man. Tyson pulled the trigger and heard the round make contact and a groan of pain. The warehouse was suddenly illuminated and Tyson saw several other armed assailants.

"Aw, crap." Tyson muttered as he dashed for cover, bullets hitting the floor behind him. Hiding behind a crate, he peeked around the corner, and saw one target facing away. Perfect, Tyson thought. He quickly aimed and pulled the trigger, and was rewarded with a scream of pain. A hail of bullets landed on the crate, protecting Tyson from harm. He crept to the other stack, and turned the corner to find another hostile. Tyson quickly swept his arms under his assailant and pulled the trigger twice. The man fell silently. Tyson continued in this fashion, downing enemies left and right. When all but one remained, Tyson leveled his pistol, and pulled the trigger. A click responded, and Tyson threw the empty gun away in anger.

The hostile was likewise out of ammo. The two approached each other, preparing for the

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laboriously. Tyson panted and sweat dripped from his temples. He sprinted as fast as his legs would allow and left the warehouse.

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